

In the claims:

Please cancel, without prejudice, claims 1-19 and 22.

1-19. **(Cancelled)**

20. **(Currently amended)** A method of screening for compounds that bind to a *patched* protein, said method comprising:

(a) combining a candidate compound with a cell comprising an expression cassette further comprising (i) a transcriptional initiation region, (ii) a transcriptional termination region, and (iii) a nucleic acid sequence encoding the *patched* protein under the transcriptional regulation of said transcriptional initiation region and said transcriptional termination region, wherein said nucleic acid sequence (I) encodes the *patched* protein, which *patched* protein is present ~~expressed~~ in the membrane of said cell and (II) hybridizes under stringent conditions, including a wash step of 0.2X SSC at 65 °C, to the nucleic acid sequence represented in ~~SEQ ID NO: 9 or~~ SEQ ID NO: 18, and wherein the *patched* protein can bind to a hedgehog polypeptide; and

(b) assaying for the binding of said candidate compound to ~~said~~ the *patched* protein.

21-22. **(Cancelled)**

23. **(Previously presented)** The method of claim 20, wherein said cell is a mammalian cell.

24. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 20, wherein the *patched* protein is encoded by a nucleic acid sequence represented in ~~SEQ ID NO: 9 or~~ SEQ ID NO: 18.

25. **(Currently amended)** The method of claim 20, wherein the *patched* protein comprises an amino acid sequence represented in ~~SEQ ID NO: 10 or~~ SEQ ID NO: 19.